

**Translated by: Salwa Wahba**

## **Be A Leader!**

### **The Leadership: A Talent of Some or a Gift for All?**

Many people suffer from the feeling of inferiority, that they are not capable of becoming leaders, and that they do not have any special talents that make them distinct and fit for a leadership position, as if they were created to become helpless tails.

The incarnated Word of God came from heaven to rectify our concepts and to give us great capabilities to exercise the work of leadership with sound understanding. Master Christ came, not only to correct our concept of leadership, but to offer Himself as a practical example of the live Leader. He gave us Himself, so that when we unite with Him we would be trained for the true leadership, realizing that He is the true hidden Leader that works inside us and through us as we are working with Him [1 Corinthians 3:9]! Let mankind be united with Him, so that all of them would become leaders, kings, priests and people of high authority. Therefore, He was called the King of kings, the LORD of lords and the Chief of priests. Indeed, the Word of God took the form of a slave, and with His own will He took the very last rank of mankind, so that with His humbleness He would embrace the entire mankind and grant them the spirit of the true leadership, where they would enjoy the active humbleness that does not urge us to run away from the serious commitment and the feeling of responsibility. He is the divine Leader of the leaders that carry His Spirit!

### **Our Christ, the Leader of Leaders!**

In His humbleness, the Word of God became an embryo in the womb of St. Mary. While He was still an embryo, He practiced the work of leadership so that every man would realize that he is created to be a leader. When John the Baptist met with Him while He was still an embryo, John the embryo practiced a leading role and preached his mother, Elizabeth, not with his tongue, but with his entire being as he leaped for joy [Luke 1:44]. Thus, it is comely unto the parents, as well as unto all leaders, to follow Elizabeth and to realize that while the child is still an embryo in his mother's womb, he has a leading role and effect even upon them.

When Master Christ was a twelve year old boy, He confirmed His leading role with His saying unto St. Mary: "I must be about my Father's business!" [Luke 2:49]. He spent three days in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions; and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. This behavior is considered a revolution in the world of children, for we should not take them lightly, but rather respect their mission, personalities, capabilities and roles.

During His service till the time of His resurrection He opened up our eyes so that we would practically understand the concept of leadership:

- a. As a divine Leader He used to care for every man, serving the Jews and praising the faith of the heathen that accepted Him and enjoyed His work in them [Matthew 8:10; Luke 7:9]. He

cared for the children and considered them an example for those who desire to enter into God's Kingdom [Matthew 18:13]. He cared for the women, even the Samaritan woman [John 4] and the adulteress [Luke 7:47]. He cared for the salvation of the sinners and the extortionists [Matthew 11:19].

- b. As a Leader, He patiently got into continuous discussions with many, like the Samaritan woman, the rich young man [Matthew 19], the Pharisees, etc... to train us on the constructive dialogue.
- c. When He was crucified on the cross, His Spirit was set off to hell to carry those who died on the hope and to enter with them into Paradise. He is a Leader, even if the whole world considered Him as a failure and refused Him.

With His resurrection He became the firstborn from the dead [Colossians 1:18], leading the believers to become members in the church of the firstborn [Hebrews 12:23]. When He went up to heaven, He did not break His disciples' souls, but rather they returned to Jerusalem with great joy [Luke 24:52], realizing that the Head has ascended to the glories. Thus, it is comely unto them to rejoice, for He was not separated from them, but rather works in them and through them to carry many with His Holy Spirit unto the One that ascended to the heavenly glories. They realized their true leadership role as members in the body of Christ that ascended unto heaven to prepare great glories for those that believe in Him.

*In this way Master Christ has opened up before us the road of leadership through His life since His incarnation till His resurrection.*

### **The Divine Leadership and Our Work of Leadership:**

Our belief in God opens up our eyes to realize His care for us and His divine leadership, not just as an example for us to follow, but as He is working through us and in us as we practice our work of leadership that He has trusted us with.

#### ***The Creator and Man's Role of Leadership:***

Solomon stood in amazement before the wisdom of the Creator that became clear, not only in the creation of man in utmost ingenuity or in His care for man by creating the whole world for him, but in what is even greater that He has made a leader out of him to rule over the world. God has commanded Adam, his wife and their children to come, and said: "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed" [Genesis 1:28-29]. Therefore, Solomon has said: "And ordained man through thy wisdom, that he should have dominion over the creatures which thou has made, and order the world according to equity and righteousness, and execute judgment with an upright heart" [Wisdom 9:2-3].

#### ***The Divine Perfection and Our True Perfection:***

Every believer desires to assimilate God. The belief in the absolute one God in whose features lies the symbol of His perfection over all other imperfect beings; while the belief in the eternal Trinity gives us a wider understanding of perfection. Some might ask: how could the Father be perfect in His features when is not separated from the Son and the Holy Spirit (who are sharing His features)? The same thing goes for the Son and the Holy Spirit. We can respond to this question by the fact that the true perfection is not revealed through isolated self-sufficiency, but through the eternal love movement in God and the endless mutual relationships. The absolute perfection of the Father is shared by the Son and the Holy Spirit, for they are One with Him. In this way, the faith in the Trinity reveals unto us the spirit of partnership and love, for the perfect can only enjoy his perfection through the others and the true leader sees everyone as a leader.

Although each hypostasis of the Holy Trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) has His own distinct role, the Holy Trinity remains one in the essence and in the divinity, for the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father. The perfection of the Father does not mean that He is greater than the Son or the Holy Spirit, for He is equal with them in their perfection and greatness. Likewise, the perfection of the Son is in the perfection of the Father and the Holy Spirit, etc.

God is a unique, wondrous and transcendent example that carries us to enjoy the unity amongst ourselves, where each of us sees the success of his brothers, their perfection and even their falls as his own. This is the true leadership that works with the Spirit of God.

The leader that lives with the Spirit of God prays and works with all his might for the sake of the success of others no matter their roles, as the success of every leader, even if he did not know him by name or meet him in the flesh, is his own success.

### ***The Leadership and the Fatherhood:***

Our faith in God, the Father of mankind, opens up our hearts with love to carry some fatherhood or motherhood spirit unto all mankind regardless our age, position or capabilities. As the little child feels the warmth of his Father God's embrace, he would want to embrace every man in his heart and to pour love inside him with a divine wisdom. He would find his joy in the joy of others and his glory in theirs!

### ***The Leadership and Stooping unto Every Man:***

As we enjoy the fatherly love through our faith in the Father, our faith in the incarnated Word of God -that bowed the heavens and came down and that, being one with God, became human, took upon Him the form of a servant and obeyed unto death, even the death of the cross [Philippians 2:8]- and our unity with Him as members in His body would turn our life as true leaders into a race towards the cross for the sake of the salvation, the growth and the eternal glory of every man. Nothing else occupies the heart of the leader like to see all mankind crowned with success and prepared for the eternal glory.

The purpose of the incarnation of the Word is to carry every man and to take him up unto the Father's embrace. Thus, the purpose of our leadership is to have everybody enjoy with us the

experience of sitting in the heavens, i.e. to enjoy the earnest of the eternity while we are still here on earth in the flesh.

Our Christ gives us Himself as the heavenly Bread, the Way, the Truth, the Life and the Resurrection, even the unique divine Friend that satisfies all our needs. Therefore, the true leader that carries Master Christ inside him seeks to have his brothers -all mankind- enjoy the real satiation and the heavenly joy.

The true leader carries inside him and enjoys the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, and thus cannot lose his internal peace or the heavenly joy even in the worst moments, becoming indeed a source of continuous joy in Christ that dwells inside him.

***The Leadership and the Spirit of Truth that is not separated from the Spirit of Love:***

Before His resurrection, Master Christ promised His disciples –being the leaders- that He will send them the Spirit of truth to declare the divine truth unto them. Likewise, as we carry God's Holy Spirit, we do not cease the effective work of leadership:

1. With God's Holy Spirit we constantly scoop from the truth so that we would enjoy it and pour it unto others that they may enjoy the growing knowledge that does not dry out or age.
2. As we pour love unto every man, we ought to present it filled with truth; for as we adhere unto the truth, we would not separate it from love, otherwise love would become laxity and truth would become aggression!
3. Our faith in the leadership of God's Holy Spirit makes us leaders that are filled with hope in every man; thus we would never despair from the salvation of anyone even if he was catching his last breath.

This is a simplified image of our work of leadership in God, the greatest Leader, who will definitely realize the plan of salvation and destroy the kingdom of darkness. In our leadership we do not fear the devil, any man or the sin, for through Him we would behold the enemy under our feet and enjoy the victory of the One that said: "Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world" [John 16:33], putting on the goodness of Christ as His free gift unto us.

**Leaders under All Circumstances**

Many times people would ask: How can we generate the spirit of leadership inside our children under the difficult spiritual circumstances while we are in the land of immigration -whether in a European or an Arab country? We are exceedingly busy at work that takes up almost all of our time and effort, and thus cannot find the opportunity to even spend some time with our children, who in turn cannot attend the spiritual activities of the church all week like they do in many of the churches in Egypt.

The Holy Book has recorded for us many great images and examples of leaders that were born in the land of captivation or have lived there since their childhood. They had a spirit of leadership

despite their alienation, the fact that there was no altar or a house of God in their midst and that the priests were unable to perform their roles. For example:

- a. **Mordecai:** He and his people were exposed to total destruction, and they had no savior according to the human judgment. However, he inflicted the spirit of leadership and responsibility inside his niece, Queen Esther, declaring unto her: "For if you altogether hold your peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but you and your father's house shall be destroyed, and who knows whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" [Esther 4:14]. Mordecai, who has urged his orphan niece to advance with the other girls so that the king would choose a queen from amongst them, supported her with the spirit of strength to lean on God's embrace that -with or without her- shall save His people. Nevertheless, it was a unique opportunity for her to work!
- b. **Daniel:** Daniel had a compelling role in assuring the three men while they were in the land of captivity that they are the men of God and witnesses of the holy life. Thus, they all purposed in their hearts that will not defile themselves with the portion of the king's meat. Moreover, when Daniel was exposed to his first serious confrontation with the king, he asked the three men to support him with their prayers, thus encouraging them to realize their roles and responsibilities.
- c. **Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah:** They all worked in their lives to activate the potentials and capabilities of others, whether they were the descendants of kings, or priests, Levites, tribe leaders or from the people, even the children. Neither our age, our capabilities, nor the surrounding circumstances can hold us back; rather with the spirit of hope we trust that God's plan will be realized inside us through His Holy Spirit that dwells in us.

### **The Concept of the Live Leader:**

First: The role of the live leader is not just to plan or to organize, but to develop the spirit of leadership inside all that are around him. The leader that centralizes all the work in himself guarantees its failure, drives himself towards pride, and trespasses unto the rights of everyone around him regardless their age, capabilities and talents. The live leader wisely supports the men and the women, the children, the elderly and the youngsters, the sick and the healthy, the educated and the illiterate to work with the spirit of God, each in his own position according to his talents.

Second: The wise leader is the one that works for the coming generations by studying what they need and preparing the current generation to work with a balanced and wise view of the future. Like that he would prepare the youngsters to work for the benefit of the next generation.

### ***How can we make Leaders out of our Children and Subordinates?***

1. The shared love and the internal joy are two sides of one life that can promote the creation of the spirit of leadership. The child that does not only enjoy his parents' love, but also their shared love unto one another in an atmosphere of real joy and happiness, will definitely develop a sound personality that is capable of leading even in an early age. On the contrary,

the child that is raised inside a house that is filled with quarrels and conflicts or in a cold atmosphere that lacks the warmth of love might carry indignation inside him towards his surrounding society; he might even hate his own life and lose his purpose and goal in life. What I said about the house applies to the church as well. The priest that carries a true fatherly spirit towards his people, along with a cheerful face and constant encouragement, can lead many with the Holy Spirit of God towards the constructive work of themselves and of those around them.

2. One shall support the child, the young man and even the elderly and the sick to discover their talents and capabilities, for God has created no man incapable of working even if he was handicapped!
3. One shall not underestimate any man under any circumstance, no matter how bad his mistakes were or his inability to perform a certain task.

### **Inquiries about the Leadership:**

*Isn't the Invitation to practice the Spirit of Leadership considered a Call for Pride?*

One cannot deny that in His incarnation our Christ was humble, for it was said about Him that He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” [Philippians 2:8], yet in His utmost humbleness on the cross He exercised His leadership role as He carried those that were captivated in hell and entered with them into Paradise, leading the entire mankind to enjoy the reconciliation with the Father.

The true humbleness does not mean underestimating our capabilities in the LORD, but rather love and openness of the heart to all mankind. This love that leads us towards humbleness is in itself the spirit of leadership through which we would never stop struggling for the salvation of our brethren, their success and their participation with us in the divine glories.

*If Everyone was a Leader, where are the Led?*

When someone is chosen to be a king or a chief of a country, he closes the door before the others to occupy that same position. However, when Jesus came to us as a Firstborn, He made us all a church of firstborns. When He became a King on the cross, He made us all kings. When He practiced His role as the heavenly Chief of priests, He granted all His true believers a general priestly feature.

### **What Do the Fathers Say about Leadership?**

In his fourth homily about the Book of Ecclesiastes, St. Gregory Bishop of Nisus has put a divine basis for resisting the system of slavery and validating the sovereignty of every man in the following points:

- Any human being that considers himself a master of his kind commits a terrible mistake, considering himself to be different from his subordinates (as if he was of a different nature than theirs).

- God created the human nature to be free, giving every man the right to make his own decisions.
- One has to differentiate between the possessions and the irrational creation on the one hand and the free rational being that is in the image and likeness of God on the other hand.
- It is impossible to acquire sovereignty over the free image of God, for no man can pay the price of another man!
- One cannot be called a “Master” just because he has subordinates.
- Who do you think you are to consider yourself a master of another human being?
- Do not say: Why didn’t I receive the gift of educating, for if God has blessed me with it, I would have used it to the benefit of many. If you weren’t articulate, eloquent or capable to deduce the meanings, then in all cases it is fine that you know the general understandable matters (i.e. the simple knowledge of the salvation). If you didn’t have the ability to preach in the church in the presence of the whole group and to deduce the meanings when educating, yet you have children, neighbors, relatives, brothers and friends that you can talk to. You do not need to be proficient in the rules of elocution or to prepare a speech, but speak with them as if you are eloquent and articulate, for if you are not careful in what is easy and simple, how could you be trusted with what is serious and gracious?!
- For this reason God came down to us with His heavenly high teachings in order to take away our thoughts and to enable us to follow Him as much as possible, but how can we follow Christ? ... When we work in everything for the greater good without seeking our own personal benefit.

St. Paul said: “For even Christ pleased not himself, but, as it is written: The reproaches of them that reproached you fell on me” [Romans 15:3, Psalms 69:9]. Therefore, one shall not seek what is best for oneself, but rather what is best when one cares for the benefit of his brethren, for what is best for them, is best for us as we are one body and members of one another. If he was not a relative or a friend of yours, yet as a human being he shares your same nature, has the same God, serves along with you and is your companion in your trip, for he was born with you in the same world.

### **St. John Golden Mouth**

- If you want, each and every one of you is a teacher. I know many families that received great benefits from the virtues of their servants. I am addressing everybody in general and each and every one of you in particular so that everyone would care for the salvation of his brethren, for there is a great benefit in this work, not just because it would make the work easier for the teacher, but so that everyone would participate in the pains in order to be capable to become a teacher on his own.

- We can consider every believer to be a leader of his house, his friends, his servants, his wife and his children.
- Make your house a church.
- Nothing can make you similar to Christ like your care for your brethren.
- I cannot believe in the salvation of any man that does not work for the salvation of his brother.
- There is nothing more platitudinous like a Christian that does not care for the salvation of others.

**St. John Golden Mouth**